

EDITORIAL.

THERE IS a certain fixity necessary in the terms which are used in descriptive botany; yet if anyone will compare descriptions of plants written 100 — or even 50 — years ago with modern ones the changes that have occurred in terminology will be striking. These changes have crept in almost unperceived in most cases, and have been made in deference to modifications in the morphological concepts. But if the list of terms now in use be scrutinized it will be seen that many do not in the least correspond to the present views of the morphology of the parts. Note for example the terms relating to the flower mentioned by Prof. MacMillan at p. 178; and further such as acaulescent, adnate (anthers), albumen and plumule for the Phanerogams; stipe and frond for the Ferns; areolation, apophysis and acrocarpous for the Mosses; and a host of others that might be specified.

WHAT SHALL be done with such terms? Drop them and substitute the more correct ones, says the morphologist; whereat the systematist raises his hands in holy horror, because the necessity for change does not appear. Nor it is likely that it can be made obvious to him. He is looking at the blue side of the shield; the morphologist at the white. Here is an opportunity for the botanical congress of 1893. It may wisely undertake not only to unite systematists in some common action regarding nomenclature, but take steps toward revising the inconsistent terminology of the science.

WE SAY "of the *science*," for morphology is by no means guiltless in this matter. The most thorough attempt to revise the terminology of the reproductive organs of cryptogams was made a few years ago by Bennett and Murray. Though not wholly consistent nor wise, the move was in the right direction and their suggestions might serve as a basis for future revision.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

The Podostemaceæ.

Warming's paper on this family¹ contains an admirable account of the characters of this small, but very interesting family, the position of which, formerly in dispute, the author states to be close to the *Saxifragaceæ*. Several years ago Mr. Warming made a special study of this family, and the present paper contains most of the results of the investigations, which have been made with his usual acuteness in morphological and anatomical questions. The structure of the vege-

¹ WARMING, EUG.—Podostemaceæ in Engler und Prantl: Die natuerlichen Pflanzenfamilien III. 2. a. Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann. September, 1890.